

WILSON IN ARMED NEUTRALITY SPEECH ASKS RIGHT TO USE ARMY AND NAVY TO PROTECT AMERICA'S INTERESTS WHEREVER IN PERIL

D. C. FOOD PROBE BOARD NAMED

Commissioners Appoint Committee of Three to Investigate Shortage and Causes.

SEEKS \$6,000,000 INQUIRY

Senator Borah Introduces Resolution Looking to Reforms and Relief of Sufferers.

Brought face to face with the realization of the possibility of a serious food shortage in the District, the Commissioners today appointed a committee consisting of George M. Roberts, superintendent of weights, measures, and markets; Charles F. Nesbit, superintendent of insurance, and Dr. William C. Woodward, health officer, to ascertain whether such a shortage actually exists, and if so what steps can be taken to ameliorate conditions.

The committee was appointed on motion of Commissioner Newman, president of the board. None of the members knew they were to be called upon for such duty until notified this afternoon of their appointment.

"We are anxious that every facility of the District Government be utilized to serve the people of Washington in what seems to be a crisis in food supplies and prices," said Commissioner Newman.

First to Get Facts.

"Of course, the first thing to be done is to get the facts, and for this purpose we have appointed a committee of department heads especially qualified, first, to investigate and, second, to find remedies, if there be any."

"We realize, of course, that our facilities are meagre, but it is possible we can accomplish something, and we at least propose to do our best, offering, incidentally, a clearing house through which any one who has any information or any suggestion may operate. We invite all persons in the District—including transportation officials, dealers in food and consumers—to co-operate with the committee appointed today."

"The Commissioners would be hugely gratified if it were possible, as a result of this initial step, for the people of Washington to find means to obtain an adequate food supply promptly and at reasonable prices."

Asks \$6,000,000 For Probe.

Senator Borah of Idaho introduced in the Senate today a joint resolution appropriating \$6,000,000 for the relief of the situation caused by the shortage of food in New York and other centers of population.

The resolution directs investigation (Continued on Third Page.)

PLANS 4 MORE D. C. JUDGES

Senate Committee Reports Bill With Important Amendment.

The Senate Judiciary Committee today ordered a favorable report on the bill to create two additional associate justices of the District Supreme Court.

At the same time it amended the bill so as to provide for two additional associate justices for the Court of Appeals of the District.

Senator Overman, as acting chairman of the committee, will press the bill to passage this session if possible.

BRITISH RETAKE KUT

Turkish Garrison in Full Retreat From Tigris Stronghold.

LONDON, Feb. 26.—Kut-el-Amara has been recaptured by British forces. The commander of the Turkish garrison, General Bonar Law, made the announcement this afternoon in the House of Commons.

He said the Turkish garrison was in full retreat.

A statement from the British Mesopotamia expeditionary force last night had, in a measure, prepared England for the long expected and devoutly wished for victory at Kut. It was then stated that the Turks in the city had been practically surrounded. Kut-el-Amara held a sentimental value to England because it was the scene of General Townshend's heroic stand against the Turkish forces early in the war.

He held out months against the foe, until starvation set in, and his forces were so reduced by privation that he was forced to capitulate.

"The whole of the enemy's positions at Sannaiyat and Kut-el-Amara have been secured," the Mesopotamian statement announced. "Kut itself is automatically ours."

Florida Tourists' Patronage is merited by Atlantic Coast Line's N. Y. & Florida Special train on last season's record of punctuality, 97% perfect service. 1486 New York ave. N. Y.—Advt.

POINTS ABOUT FINAL REVIVAL SERVICE

Gypsy Smith, Jr., closes his four weeks' revival at the tabernacle, Sixteenth and V streets northwest, tonight.

The services begin at 7:30 o'clock and no seats will be reserved. "From Gypsy Tent to Pulpit" will be the subject of the final sermon.

The number of converts thus far credited to the evangelist is 812. He hopes to make it more than 1,000 tonight.

One hundred and ten men and women acknowledged their conversion at last night's services. Fully 100,000 persons have heard the evangelist's sermons since his campaign began here on January 28.

A free will offering will be taken for the evangelist at tonight's services. Thus far the evangelist has received nothing for his services here.

Work of tearing down the tabernacle will begin tomorrow. The congregations which attended the services during the first two weeks contributed \$3,500 with which to pay for the structure.

EVANGELIST WILL BARE LIFE STORY

Gypsy Smith, Jr., to Conclude His Revival in Capital With Service Tonight.

Gypsy Smith, Jr., will conclude his four weeks' revival in Washington tonight.

At midnight he will bid farewell to his many friends and co-workers in the National Capital and go to his home, Noank, Conn., for a two-day rest. On Wednesday he will go to Pensacola, Fla., where he will conduct a month's revival.

Tonight the evangelist will bare the story of his life, the greater part of which, he admits, was mispent. Talking as his subject "From Gypsy Tent to Pulpit," he will review the miserable history of his people and his immediate forbears and conclude with the story of the conversion of his grandfather, his father, Gypsy Smith, Jr., and himself.

Proud of Tribe's Record.

Far from being ashamed of the understratum of civilization from which he sprang, the evangelist is proud of it, because it enables him to drive home the fact that from the untutored, untutored, selfish, self-indulgent, and ungodly tribe to which he traces his origin have come thirteen men and women now preaching the Gospel in all quarters of the globe.

With this sermon Gypsy Smith, Jr., will conclude not only the most remarkable and successful evangelistic campaign in his own career, but one (Continued on Ninth Page.)

D. C. SOLDIER LOSES LIFE

Walking in Sleep, John A. Sweeney Falls From Troop Train.

While walking in his sleep on board the troop train bearing the District militia back from the border, Private John A. Sweeney, aged twenty-seven, of Company E, Third Infantry, stumbled off a platform last night, and was killed.

Notification of his death was sent to the War Department from New Orleans by Capt. William Gehman, and forwarded early this morning to the soldier's mother, Mrs. Edward Sweeney, 115 Massachusetts avenue northwest.

Sweeney was formerly a shipping clerk in the Washington express offices of the Wells, Fargo Company. He is survived by his mother, three sisters and two brothers.

No decision concerning the disposition of the body will be made by the family till officials at the War Department are able to get in communication with Col. Glendie H. Young, regimental commander, in charge of the troop train.

VILLA-CARRANZA-BATTLE

Clash Reported on Border Thirty Miles From Ojinaga.

PRESIDIO, Tex., Feb. 26.—Mexicans reaching here report a battle thirty miles from Ojinaga, between Carranza forces and Villistas. According to this information, the Carranzistas lost seventeen killed and many wounded, while the Villistas left ten dead on the field.

Recruits are reported to have crossed the Rio Grande near Fort Hancock, Tex., to join a Villa command, said to have been operating near San Ignacio, Chihuahua, recently.

SEEK TO AVERT TRANSIT TIE-UP

Companies Trying to Defer Negotiations With Men Until After Inauguration.

VAST CROWDS EXPECTED

Utility Official Says Time Is Not Opportune for Settlement of Disputes.

The reply of the traction companies to their employees probably will be a suggestion that the consideration of any new agreement be postponed until after the inauguration.

One of the company officials in discussing the matter for The Times today said:

"We are considering the new working agreement and giving as much time and attention to it as possible in these days when we are planning to handle one of the biggest crowds that ever attended an inauguration."

Argument For Delay.

"We do not regard this as the proper time to consider questions at issue between employees and officials of great public utilities like the street car service. I think both employees and employers should put aside their own affairs and all get together to handle the crowds. People are not coming to the inauguration if they hear there is strike talk in the air."

"I suggest that we give the crowds the best service we can during the inauguration and after the ceremonies the employees and employers can meet for a full discussion of the questions at issue."

The present agreement does not expire until March 11 and the city should not be stirred up before and during the inauguration by the questions to be settled in the new agreement."

Union Men Displeased.

Failure to receive replies to their request for a conference with the heads of the two companies, and the suggestion that discussion of the questions involved in the new working agreement be postponed until after inauguration, proved anything but gratifying to officials of the union and the car men generally.

"We expect to receive replies to our request for a conference within the next day or two," said Garth Calderhead, financial secretary of the union. "It would seem that courtesy would prompt replies within that time to a request made last Friday."

Two meetings of the union, one for the day employees and another for the night workers, will be held Thursday at Typographical Temple. It is expected the replies of the companies' officials will be received by that time, so they may be read to the assembled unionists.

YARROWDALE MEN FREE

Ambassador Willard Sends Report From Madrid to State Dept.

Ambassador Willard, at Madrid, today called the State Department that the Spanish foreign office has notified him the seventy-two American Yarrowdale prisoners were released on February 16.

The dispatch, it was stated, was very brief, and did not contain any information as to whether the Americans had been given transportation out of Germany.

The dispatch was sent to the Madrid foreign office by the Spanish ambassador at Berlin, who represents American interests in Germany.

NEAR D. C. BILL AGREEMENT

Senate and House Conferences Again Discuss Measure.

Senate and House conferences on the District bill met again today and agreed to all but three items which remain in dispute. The three subjects of disagreement are:

The increase of pay of District employees.

The Gallinger municipal hospital.

The payment of damages to Thomas Keller.

The Senate amendment with respect to the intangible tax law was accepted.

The House provision with respect to probator officers was accepted.

With reference to the proposed purchase of the Klinge ford tract of land a compromise was reached and \$25,000 was allowed for the proposed culvert connecting with the tract.

So far as the increase of pay of District employees is concerned, the conferees are simply awaiting the action of House and Senate on the legislative and agricultural bills. Once the standard is agreed to by the two houses, the District conferees will accede to it.

LINER LACONIA SUNK; CARRIED SIX AMERICANS

London Reports 720 Passengers Have Been Saved From Sea.

WAS PALATIAL CUNARDER

Biggest of U-Boat Victims Since Decree of "Frightfulness."

LONDON, Feb. 26.—The 18,000-ton Cunard line steamer Laconia fell victim today to the German submarine warfare, being torpedoed off the Irish coast. The vessel was en route from New York to England.

It is reported that 270 of her passengers have been rescued.

The Laconia is the biggest victim of the German submarine warfare since the new decree was announced.

The Laconia was a steel screw steamship of 18,000 tons, one of the largest vessels now registered at Liverpool, and was built in 1912. She was 600 feet in length and of 77 feet beam.

Sailed February 15.

The vessel sailed from New York on February 15. She carried passengers, mail and cargo for Liverpool.

The Cunard line officials in New York refused to give any information on the Laconia. They said they are under absolute orders from the British admiralty not to discuss such news until they receive it from their British home office.

Front Hears of 278.

The Cunard carried mail from America. She was, torpedoed last night. Another steamer rescued 270 of her passengers. The admiralty has not announced whether there were any fatalities.

A further statement this afternoon said that a majority of the survivors were expected to land at Queenstown, and the others at Bantry, Ireland.

Mr. Frost, the American consul at Queenstown, reported the Laconia was sunk about 10 o'clock last evening, and that 278 survivors are en route to Queenstown.

CARRIED CONTRABAND

Names of American Passengers Not Yet Available.

NEW YORK, Feb. 26.—Six Americans were aboard the Cunard liner Laconia when she was sunk, it was stated here this afternoon by the Cunard line. Their names were not immediately available.

The Laconia was manned by British officers and a British crew. She carried contraband cargo, in addition to mails.

Her last trip from Liverpool ended here February 14, when she brought across thirty-seven passengers.

Capt. W. R. D. Irvine was in command of the liner; G. Bain was chief engineer; G. S. Kennedy surgeon, and W. Ballyu chief steward.

The Times' Local News

Despite the increased cost of paper, The Times is constantly increasing its news service and space. In local news especially has it added to both quantity and quality until it is printing more local news than any paper in the city. The record for the six week days of last week was:

	Cols. of Local News	No. of Local Items
THE TIMES	133	784
Next paper...	95	495
Next paper...	65	341
Next paper...	64	514

All the News in The Times

FULL TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gentlemen of the Congress:

I have again asked the privilege of addressing you because I am moving through critical times during which it seems to me to be my duty to keep in close touch with the houses of Congress, so that neither counsel nor action shall run at cross purposes between us.

On the 3d of February I officially informed you of the sudden and unexpected action of the Imperial German government in declaring its intention to disregard the promises it had made to this Government in April last and undertake immediate submarine operations against all commerce, whether of belligerents or of neutrals, that should seek to approach Great Britain and Ireland, the Atlantic coasts of Europe, or the harbors of the eastern Mediterranean, and to conduct those operations without regard to the established restrictions of international practice, without regard to any considerations of humanity even which might interfere with their object. That policy was forthwith put into practice. It has now been in active execution for nearly four weeks.

Its practical results are not yet fully disclosed. The commerce of other neutral nations is suffering severely, but not, perhaps, very much more severely than it was already suffering before the first of February, when the new policy of the Imperial government was put into operation. We have asked the co-operation of the other neutral governments to prevent these depredations, but so far none of them has thought it wise to join us in any common course of action. Our own commerce has suffered, is suffering, rather in apprehension than in fact, rather because so many of our ships are timidly keeping to their home ports than because American vessels have been sunk. Two American vessels have been sunk, the Housatonic and the Lyman M. Law. The case of the Housatonic, which was carrying foodstuffs consigned to a London firm, was essentially like the case of the Fry, in which, it will be recalled, the German government admitted its liability for damages, and the lives of the crew, as in the case of the Fry, were safeguarded with reasonable care. The case of the Law, which was carrying lemon-boxes to Palermo, disclosed a ruthlessness of action which deserves grave condemnation, but was accompanied by no circumstances which might not have been expected at any time in connection with the use of the submarine warfare.

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In sum, therefore, the situation we find ourselves in with regard to the actual conduct of the German submarine warfare against commerce and its effects upon our own ships and people is substantially the same that it was when I addressed you on the 3d of February, except for the tying up of our shipping in our own ports because of the unwillingness of our shipowners to risk their vessels at sea without insurance, and the growing number of our ships which are being sunk. In effect, what the new German submarine orders were meant to accomplish, so far as we are concerned, we can only say, therefore, that to deny that which I have ventured to hope the German commanders would in fact avoid has not occurred.

But, while this is happily true, it must be admitted that there have been certain additional indications and expressions of purpose on the part of the German press and the German authorities which have increased rather than lessened the impression that, if our ships and our people are spared, it will be because of fortunate circumstances or because the commanders of the German submarines which they may happen to encounter exercise an unexpected discretion and restraint rather than because of the instructions under which those commanders are acting. It would be foolish to deny that the situation is fraught with the gravest possibilities and dangers. No thoughtful man can fail to see that the necessity for definite action may come at any time, if we are in fact, and not in word merely, to defend our elementary rights as a neutral nation. It would be most imprudent to be unprepared.

I cannot in such circumstances be unmindful of the fact that the expiration of the term of the present Congress is immediately at hand, by constitutional limitation; and that it would in all likelihood require an unusual length of time to assemble and organize the Congress which is to succeed it. I feel that I ought, in view of that fact, to obtain from you (full and immediate assurance of the authority which I may need at any moment to exercise. No doubt I already possess that authority without ap-

peal, warrant of law, by the plain implication of my constitutional duties, and I prefer, in the present circumstances, not to act upon general implication. I wish to feel that the authority and the power of the Congress are behind me in whatever it may become necessary for me to do. We are jointly the servants of the people and must act together and in their spirit, so far as we can divine and interpret it.

No one doubts what it is our duty to do. We must defend our commerce and the lives of our people in the midst of the present trying circumstances, with discretion but with clear and steadfast purpose. Only the method and the extent remain to be chosen, upon the occasion, if occasion should indeed arise. Since it has unhappily proved impossible to safeguard our neutral rights by diplomatic means against the unwarranted infringements they are suffering at the hands of Germany, there may be no recourse but to armed neutrality, which we shall know how to maintain and for which there is abundant American precedent.

It is devoutly to be hoped that it will not be necessary to put armed force anywhere into action. The American people do not desire it, and our desire is not different from theirs. I am sure that they will understand the spirit in which I am now acting, the purpose I hold nearest my heart and would wish to exhibit in everything I do. I am anxious that the people of the nations at war also should understand and not mistrust us. I hope that I need give no further proof of my assurance than I have already given throughout nearly three years of anxious patience that I am the friend of peace and mean to preserve it for America as long as I can.

As I have said, I am not now proposing or contemplating war or any steps that need lead to it. I merely request that you will accord me by your own vote and definite bestowal the means and the authority to safeguard in practice the right of a great people who are at peace and who are desirous of exercising none but the rights of peace to follow the pursuits of peace in business and in industry, and rights recognized time out of mind by all the civilized nations of the world. No course of my choosing or of theirs will lead to war. War can come only by the willful acts and aggressions of others.

You will understand why I can make no definite proposals or forecasts of action now and must ask for your supporting authority in the most general terms. The form in which action may become necessary cannot yet be foreseen. I believe that the people will be willing to trust me to act with restraint, with prudence, and in the true spirit of amity and good faith, which they have themselves displayed throughout these trying months, and it is in that belief that I request that you will authorize me to supply to our merchant ships with defensive armaments, should that become necessary and with the means of using them, and to employ any other instrumentalities or methods that may be necessary and adequate to protect our ships and our people in their legitimate and peaceful pursuits on the seas. I request also that you will grant me at the same time, along with the armaments, sufficient credit to enable me to provide adequate means of protection where they are lacking, including adequate insurance against the present war risks.

I have spoken of our commerce and of the legitimate errands of our people on the seas, but you will not be misled as to my main thought, that I thought that beneath these phrases and gives them dignity and weight. It is not of material interests merely that we are thinking. It is, rather, of fundamental human rights, chief of all the right of life itself. I am thinking, not only of the rights of Americans to go and come about their proper business by way of sea, but also of something much deeper, much more fundamental than that. I am thinking of those rights of humanity without which there is no civilization. My theme is of those great principles of compassion and of protection which mankind has sought to throw about human lives, the lives of non-combatants, the lives of men who are peacefully at work keeping the industrial processes of the world going and vital, the lives of women and children and of those who supply the labour which ministers to their sustenance. We are speaking of no selfish material rights but of rights which hearts support and whose foundation is that righteous passion for justice upon which all law, all structures alike of family, of state, and of mankind must rest, as upon the ultimate base of our existence and our liberty. I cannot imagine any man with American principles at his heart hesitating to defend these things.

SEEKS POWER TO PUT GUNS ON MERCHANTMEN

Congress, in Joint Session, Hears President's Plea With Solemn Gravity.

AUSTRIAN ISSUE UNTOUCHED

Chief Magistrate Declares Time Has Passed for "Material Things."

For the second time this month President Wilson, at 1 o'clock today, went before Congress to lay before it the developments in the grave situation that confronts this country in its relations with Germany, and to ask for authority to take the next step that confronts him.

Arrives At 12:35.

President Wilson reached the Capitol at 12:35 and went immediately to the office of Speaker Clark, where he awaited the joint committee of the Senate and House to escort him into the chamber.

Within two minutes the committee had arrived and the President, message in hand, walked into the hall of the House where the assembled Senators and Congressmen awaited information as to what would be the epochal "next step" of the Administration.

A generous round of applause greeted the arrival of the President, although there was about the ovation little of the spontaneity and partisan handclapping that has greeted him before.

Sober Moment.

The legislators seemed to feel that a most sober moment was at hand, that it was no time for the display of undue enthusiasm, and that the Congress and the nation had before it the most serious problem of a generation.

Consequently, the applause at the entrance of the President was of the subdued sort. A mighty ovation, however, greeted the close of the President's message.

Evidently the idea of "armed neutrality" had gripped Senators and Congressmen, and the first stand of the President brought a great shout of approval and handclapping as Mr. Wilson bowed himself out of the chamber of the House and returned to the Speaker's office.

The reading of the President's message occupied sixteen minutes. There was absolutely no applause while the reading was in progress, nor was there any sound in the House chamber except that of the President's voice. Every seat on the floor was occupied, and the galleries were jammed to the doors.

Applause Cut Off.

It seemed that the legislators would break into approval when the President used the words "armed neutrality," the keynote of his message today. A score or more members raised their hands as though to clap their approval, but the gesture was halted midway, and the reading of the message proceeded without interruption.

The President was listened to most attentively as he asked authority to arm merchant ships, and to take any other means which may prove necessary to protect American lives and interests on the high seas.

The grim determination of the Imperial government to carry out her ruthless U-boat warfare was cited by the President in a series of offenses against America and other neutrals since the diplomatic break February 3.

The time has come, the President declared solemnly, when influences other than "mere material things" must be considered if the United States is to uphold the rights and privileges of her citizens.

The President obviously faces a real fight in Congress, asking the power that he seeks today.

He is counting, however, on a patriotic union of all the opposing factions to present a united front to Germany and the world.

Asks No Declaration.

He does not ask a declaration of war but merely "armed neutrality."

The isolation of the United States in its course of action was emphasized somewhat by the President when he called again to ask the neutrals for similar action toward the Imperial government and referred to the fact, although other neutrals were suffering as much or even more than this country, they did not appear to desire "joint action with the United States."

The President did not discuss the Austrian situation.

Follows Conference.

The announcement of the President's intention to address a joint session was made shortly after an early morning conference at the White House between President Wilson and Chairman Stone, of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Early today the President called Secretary Tumulty to the White House and read the message to him. At 9:30 Senator Stone went to the